



Maine Department of Economic and Community Development

Committed to helping Maine businesses and communities thrive.

Maine Connections

February 2010

Greetings!

Greetings from DECD!

I recently attended the Governor's Conference on Tourism. At the Governor's Award Dinner the night before, Governor Baldacci and Pat Eltman presented the annual Maine Tourism Awards, which honor individuals, businesses and organizations that have distinguished themselves through their work.

It was a beautiful event, truly representative of the caliber of our tourism industry. I am honored to live in a state that so many people love and enjoy visiting, and equally proud to know so many of the individuals that work year-round to make Maine the special destination it is for our tourists. I want to applaud Pat and her team that made the Conference such a success. You can read more about the Conference in this issue of *Maine Connections*.

Enjoy!

Thaxter R. Trafton

www.businessinmaine.com



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Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism

Last week, the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism was held at the Augusta Civic Center. Over 400 attendees gathered to participate in professional development workshops, valuable networking, and to take advantage of the opportunity to meet with tourism professionals.

Workshop topics included:

Sharing the Maine Experience with the international visitor - Attendees learned more about the market trends, how travel is sold, the partners, marketable product and the advantages of successfully hosting international visitors.

Communicating the Maine Experience through social media marketing - In this workshop, attendees learned how to use Facebook, Twitter and other social media tools to increase online visibility, engage with their audience, and drive more people to their Web sites.



During a dinner ceremony on Monday evening prior to the Conference, Governor Baldacci and Pat Eltman presented the annual Maine Tourism Awards, honoring individuals, businesses and organizations that have distinguished themselves through their work.

Award winners this year were:

- Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens of Boothbay, for Commitment to Innovation and Creativity
- Maine Wildlife Park of Gray and New England Outdoor Center of Millinocket, for Commitment to Tourism Growth
- Audrey Mills of The Mount Desert Oceanarium in Bar Harbor, for Commitment to Customer Service
- Restaurateur Michael Boland of Bar Harbor, for Commitment to Community
- Danny Lafayette of Lafayette Hotels for the Governor's Award for Tourism Excellence
- In addition, the Banquet Staff at Sunday River Resort received a special Director's Award for their work in hosting the Discover New England Tourism Summit last April.

Each year, the Conference offers the exchange of ideas and best practices that benefit Maine's most vital and valuable industry. It is the only statewide event of its kind and attendees were from all segments of the tourism industry. The Conference is a project of the Maine Office of Tourism and the Maine Tourism Commission, and is made possible with the support of many sponsors.

Photo: Audrey Mills of The Mount Desert Oceanarium in Bar Harbor getting her award for Commitment to Customer Service.

Portland 5th Best Place to Start Small Business in USA

Portland earned the fifth highest ranking in the country for **best places to launch a small business** according to a new Portfolio.com/bizjournals study on small business vitality. One hundred metro areas were part of the Portfolio.com/bizjournals study group and the highest scores went to cities that 'have prosperous economies, are expanding rapidly and are densely packed with small businesses' according to Portfolio.com (the survey defines a small business as having fewer than 100 employees). Portland previously ranked 10th in the 2009 report.

"This is exciting news for entrepreneurs and businesses looking to expand or relocate to our state," says Commissioner Thaxter Trafton. "During a recession and time of economic

unease, this is a sign that there are areas in the country where making a business investment is still a good idea and Maine is one of those places."

Nationally, Portland has the highest concentration of small businesses per capita, 34.64 per 1,000 residents. The top four ranking cities were Austin, TX, Baton Rouge, LA, Raleigh, NC and Charleston, SC.

To view the results of the study, visit:

<http://www.portfolio.com/interactive-features/2010/01/small-business-vitality-2010/>.



DECD to Support Maine Downtown Center

The Maine Downtown Center (MDC) works with downtowns across the state in their revitalization efforts and fosters downtown development that is dynamic and community-based. DECD is pleased to support MDC in 2010 with \$200,000 of Community Development Block Grant funding. Our support has allowed MDC to not only offer the Main Street Maine Program, but to create the Maine Downtown Network Program; it uses the same approach, but at a lighter, less rigorous pace.

In June 2009, MDC welcomed the first MDN communities: Augusta, Bucksport, Farmington, Lisbon, Millinocket, Norway, and Presque Isle. These communities benefit from the annual conference (to be held in Augusta on June 4) and from MDC's launch of the Downtown Institute. These workshops provide communities with the information and inspiration they need to make an impact in their downtown. The 2010 Program kicked off on January 29, 2010 with "Advocacy: Making a Positive Difference." It was well attended and very well received.

The Downtown Institute Upcoming Sessions are:

March 19: Retail Events and Merchandising

April 9: Green Design (special bonus session)

May 14: Market Analysis

September 10: Fund raising

October 15: Marketing 101: Media, Materials and the Web

December 3: Strategic Planning

MDC will be celebrating Maine Downtown Day with Legislators at the State Capital on March 9th from 9:00 AM till noon in the Welcome Center. Anyone who is interested in downtown revitalization is encouraged to attend.

MITC's *Hydro-Quebec and Eastern Canadian Energy Dynamic*

Registration is filling up for the Maine International Trade Center's upcoming program "***Hydro-Quebec and the Eastern Canadian Energy Dynamic***," to be held at Bangor Savings Bank's Eames Learning Center on February 25 in Bangor. The program will cover Hydro-Quebec's increased transmission strategies including the proposed memorandum of understanding to purchase the bulk of NB Power's generation and transmission assets - and that purchase's potential impact on Maine's energy sector.

Two speakers will discuss these topics: Christian Brosseau, VP of Wholesale Markets for Hydro-Quebec Production, and John Kerry, Director of the Maine Office of Energy Independence and Security. Mr. Brosseau joined Hydro-Quebec in December 1998 and has held progressively responsible positions for the past 11 years. In his current capacity, Brosseau is responsible for wholesale markets, including all energy transactions in markets outside Quebec and negotiating long term power supply purchase agreements. Kerry will discuss Maine's power market and update on current planning projects.

For more information or to register, visit www.mitc.com or contact Doug Sanborn at sanborn@mitc.com or (207) 541-7400.

Fire Testing, Submarine Propulsion, Fish Anesthetics, and new Blackberry Applications share January Maine Technology Institute Seed Grant Awards. Who will be next?

The Maine Technology Institute (MTI) Board of Directors recently awarded the January Seed Grant Round to 14 technology companies across Maine. From fire testing of composites at Kenway Corporation in Augusta to submarine propulsion at Griffin LLC in Brunswick to fish anesthetics at the Maine Conservation Medicine Center in Waterville to the development of new Blackberry applications at Discover Motion LLC in Carrabassett Valley, over \$164,000 was awarded by MTI leveraging more than \$210,000 from other sources. Of Maine's seven targeted technologies, five were represented in this round of funding including aquaculture and marine technology, composite materials technology, environmental technology, information technology and precision manufacturing technology. Awardee companies are located from Portland to Carrabassett Valley to Holden. A complete list of January's awardees follows.

"Maine's Seed Grant Awardees represent some of the newest and most exciting technology innovations being developed across the state," explained Betsy Biemann, President of Maine Technology Institute. "Every time we make these awards, we celebrate the entrepreneurial energy in Maine that seeks to push the envelope and develop new ways to solve problems. These companies are pioneering Maine's future."

Seed Grants of up to \$12,500 are offered six times a year to support early-stage research and development activities for new products and services that lead to the market. **The next deadline for application is February 11, 2010.** Companies across Maine who are innovating products or

services in the seven technology areas are encouraged to apply.

A company may be awarded up to \$25,000 in Seed Grants for a specific technology. Every Seed Grant requires at least a 1:1 match that can include cash, salaries, staff time, equipment and in-kind contributions directly attributable to the proposed project. Funded activities include market research, intellectual property filing, and feasibility study.

Additional approaching MTI Grant Deadline:

Cluster Initiative Program Major Awards Applications Deadline - March 18

- Cluster Initiative Awards provide funding for feasibility and planning initiatives and multi-year collaborative projects that seek to advance the competitiveness of Maine's high-potential technology clusters.
- Cluster Initiative Awards applications are accepted on a rolling basis for \$50,000. Major Awards of \$500,000 are available twice a year.

For more information, go to www.mainetechnology.org.

January 2010 Maine Technology Institute Seed Grant Awardees

Aquaculture and Marine Technology

AXAT Inc. in Holden will use its Seed Grant to support the prototype upgrade and a pilot study for land-based fish farming applications.

Griffin LLC in Brunswick will use its Seed Grant to prepare and file a patent application for an alternative submersible propulsor that will improve energy efficiency, increase range and speed, reduce noise and enhance maneuverability for submarines.

Maine Conservation Medicine Center in Waterville will use its Seed Grant to support patent, product licensing, business development planning, and trademark assistance for anesthetizing freshwater and marine fishes with only emulsified food grade ingredients with plans to produce and distribute the drug from Richmond, Maine.

Composites Materials Technology

Kenway Corporation in Augusta will use its Seed Grant to conduct ASTM fire testing and will follow-up on early phase laminate development to further pursue manufacturing opportunities within the transportation and rail industries.

Environmental Technology

Energy Circle LLC in South Freeport will use its Seed Grant to complete the development of an online software-as-a-service tool to substantially improve business processes in the energy auditing and energy efficiency retrofit contracting sector.

RoyallWear, LLC in Richmond will use its Seed Grant to engage a procurement consultant to develop procedures for purchasing, subcontract management, and supplier qualification for early stage trial production of their Jazzy Johnnys™ made from plant fiber fabric.

Information Technology

Bazaar Strategies, LLC in Falmouth will use its Seed Grant to undertake research and development for a mobile networking platform for building and managing transactional relationships.

Discover Motion, LLC in Carrabassett will use its Seed Grant to develop a beta Java-based version for their FanMisery.com Index application for the BlackBerry mobile platform.

Hall Web Services in Portland will use its Seed Grant to develop analysis and tracking tools to enable complete campaign management through a web based dashboard interface.

Labeling Solutions in South Portland will use its Seed Grant to provide an economic and authentic method to permanently and uniquely identify agricultural and seafood commodities at the exact harvest or catch location enabling traceability at case level, thereby closing the loop from the harvest field, orchard or ocean location to consumer's table.

Refill Management Systems LLC in Yarmouth will use its Seed Grant to complete pre-beta development of a software decision support tool designed to meet the needs of medical practices.

Precision Manufacturing Technology

McCabe & Associates in Winslow will use its Seed Grant to perform detailed market research, final product design and manufacture sample product sets for recently patented mechanics hand tool called Thread Shark.

Mega Industries, LLC in Gorham will use its Seed Grant for the development of devices that are used to protect very expensive radio frequency transmitters from harmful signal reflections.

Upcoming Events:

New England Products Trade Show

Don't Miss The 26th Annual NEPTS

Save the date for our 26th Annual NEPTS at the Portland Sports Complex (The Dome) from March 13-15, 2010! For more info, [click here](#)